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Fifth Freedom, 1971-08-08

The Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier

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FIFTH FREEDOM BULLETIN

NUMBER 13

AUGUST 8, 1971

HOYT TO INTRODUCE LOCAL BILL

The efforts of the Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier in this year's election campaign for Common Council in the city of Buffalo were given a large boost last week. Councilman William B. Hoyt of the Delaware district suggested that Mattachine representatives and their legal advisers meet with him near the end of August to discuss specific legislation to be introduced in the Council. Councilman Hoyt said that he himself will initiate the legislation in the Council.

The unexpected offer came after a one-hour meeting with Councilman Hoyt by four gays representing Mattachine. The Legislator, who represents a district spanning from Delaware Park to Allentown, complimented Mattachine's efforts to get the city government to deal with gay rights. He said, however, that the number of issues covered on the questionnaire sent to all Common Council candidates was impractically long, in terms of introduction of legislation. The group visiting City Hall was told to "come up with your priority" and then we will discuss the legal aspects.

There has been some consensus among MSNF members that the area of priority is that of employment, i.e. a city ordinance which would make discrimination in employment because of sexual orientation illegal.

There are several reasons why this is true. First, many "immediate" problems in Buffalo regarding police practices involve state laws, over which the Council has no power. Secondly, once gays are protected from unfair hiring and firing practices, they will be able to more easily "come out" to fight other forms of discrimination.

Lastly, the area of employment rights is less likely to bring on the organized opposition as such areas as housing.

In other political developments, gays last week went to the office of Councilwoman Alfreda Slominski, but found that she was on vacation. Her secretary assure the Mattachine represen-

tatives that Mrs. Slominski would be given their message: that we do not accept her statement that she will not meet with MSNF representatives. Since many of us are Buffalo taxpayers, we have a right to have our grievances heard.

This week a meeting with Councilman Carl A. Perla, Jr. and gays will take place in City Hall at his request. We hope to schedule other meetings with candidates this week if calendars permit.

GAYS TO "TEACH" IN POLICE ACADEMY IN FALL

A meeting with Kenneth S. Curry, Executive director of the Department of Human Relations and representatives of MSNF ended in agreement of the director to cooperate with Mattachine and two more substantial results: Gays were invited to participate in a human relations training session for police recruits, and were invited to send a representative to a Clergy-Police meeting held last week.

The Human Relations Commission has conducted human relations training for police officers during the previous two years, and has reached over half of the 1400 officers in the Buffalo police force. According to descriptions of the course, the problems of minority group-police relations is primarily considered. This year the director said he would include some time on police-homosexual relations. Gays will be invited to speak to the recruits.

The Clergy-Police meeting was held in the Buffalo Police Headquarters and included a brief encounter between Mattachine gay and Captain Kennedy. The Mattachine participant tried in vain to get Kennedy to state what exactly the threat is that gays bars represent. While Kennedy was carrying on an extended monologue about how susceptible youths are, a precinct captain stood and protested vigorously that "this man and his group" have special problems and they should not take up precious meeting

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time. Despite protests by the executive director ("even some members of the clergy are homosexual") and Kennedy himself, the issue was not pushed by the Mattachine representative. Nonetheless, a significant portion of the remainder of the meeting included discussion by the clergy of homosexual rights.

MSNF TO PUSH FOR CHURCH ACTION

The Mattachine Society is currently contacting the 38 local United Church of Christ congregations in the immediate Buffalo area to determine what has been done to implement a national statement on homosexual rights issued in April 1969. Like some other national denominations, the UCC issued a favorable statement urging local churches to take the initiative in this area. MSNF intends to push for local compliance to these national resolutions.

The Council for Christian Social Action of the UCC said in part:

"The CCSA hereby declares its opposition to all laws which make private homosexual relations between consenting adults a crime and thus urges their repeal. The CCSA also expresses its opposition to the total exclusion of homosexuals from public employment and from enlistment and induction into the armed forces, especially the dismissal by less than honorable discharges from the armed forces for homosexual practices with consenting adults in private... The CCSA also opposes, where they exist, police practices of entrapment and enticement in their attempts to enforce laws against homosexual practices and solicitation. Finally, the CCSA encourages the UCC Conferences, Associations and local churches to hold seminars, consultations, conferences, etc., for honest and open discussions of the nature of homosexuality in our society."

TV SHOW TO BE TAPED

The Channel 29 Kalidescope interview show with gays from Buffalo groups will be taped this week. Watch for it to be aired some Saturday night in the next few weeks.

FUND GOAL ALMOST REALIZED

Nearly two-thirds of the money for the mimeograph machine has been received. This machine is vital for a quality newsletter with large circulation. Please--send anything you can to:

Mimeograph Fund
MSNF-Box #975
Ellicott Square Station
Buffalo, New York 14205

If you are interested in receiving the Fifth Freedom Bulletin through the mail (plain envelope), send your name and address with \$3.00 to cover 1st class postage to Fifth Freedom Bulletin, MSNF (address below). The \$3.00 is for one year or 26 issues.

LIST OF EVENTS

August 15-The only MSNF general meeting in August-a Blind Auction and also slides from Christopher Street.

September 12-Monte Carlo Nite

September 26-Chicken Dinner

There's a possibility of a dance sometime in September, and, of course, there's the Halloween Gala October 29.

The Mattachine Society of the Niagara Frontier, Inc. is a non-profit organization formed to promote better understanding both within the gay community and with straight society. This includes promoting law reform, educating straight groups through speakers, and providing counseling and referrals for gays with problems. If you are interested in any of these programs, call our 24-hour answering service, (716) 684-5315, or write MSNF, Box 975, Ellicott Square Station, Buffalo, New York 14205.

The Fifth Freedom Bulletin is a bi-weekly newsletter of the Buffalo Gay Community. If interested in including news or working on the staff, call 897-1667.

The Fifth Freedom is published by the MSNF Publications Committee, which is solely responsible for its content.

Donn Holley, Chairman